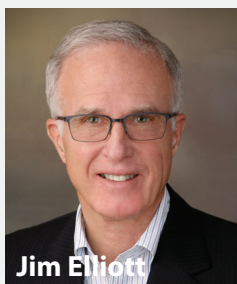


Should You Use Separate Sales Teams to Sell Advertising and Exhibits? by Jim Elliott

President's Note

Advertising and exhibit sales have often been sold by separate teams. I think that certain events have proven that to be less effective than combining those sales efforts under one sales team.



The pandemic prompted many organizations to pivot from hosting events, to finding other ways of helping their exhibitors reach former attendees, and now, with the decline of pandemic shutdowns, returning to exhibits at conferences, trade shows, conventions, and other events. During this whole time, those host organizations still needed to maintain relationships and provide services to their former exhibitors, who still had to reach their buyers.

The transition between channels was easy for some host organizations, which owned media that reached those buyers, particularly if they used one sales force to sell both exhibits at their events and advertising in their media. It was much more difficult for those host organizations that used separate sales forces for exhibits and other ways of reaching ultimate buyers, like digital or print advertising, or services like video webinars. When one sales team handles everything, their CRM system provides a 360-degree view of the marketer's activity; that increases the opportunity for sellers to create bundles with more value.

Some marketers argue that exhibit space and advertising space might be bought by different people within the client companies, so it makes sense to have specialists handle each. We have found just the opposite. When two or more sales teams (and even worse, separate companies) handle exhibit, advertising, webinar, and other channels

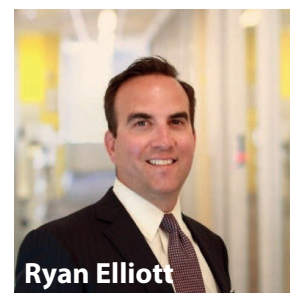
separately, they usually keep their data siloed within their own team. A lack of current information can lead to missed opportunities and channel conflict. All the applicable information about each advertiser/exhibitor is better kept in one CRM system.

The media data provider, MediaRadar, understands the value of tracking not only the millions of ads, advertisers, and parent companies that run in U.S. media (whether digital, newsletter, print, or broadcast), but also which companies are exhibiting at trade shows and other events. Subscribing marketers and their agencies can obtain current and historical data — as well as alerts for individual salespeople — in one place, in one report.

We have found that our good salespeople are well-equipped to handle exhibit sales. The process is not mysterious or any more difficult than selling advertising, and the single point of sales contact means that our sellers know much more about the client's objectives than if they only had part of the data. We have had good success in this area and are encouraged that MediaRadar is providing service that allows us to see both advertising and exhibiting activity in one place.

Ryan Elliott Interview

Ryan Elliott joined the James G. Elliott Co., Inc. as COO in 2023. In that capacity, he will not only run the operations of the sales company but will also be a valuable part of



the consulting team in a sister company, Ads&IDEAS. With an academic background in accounting and an MBA, Ryan brings a wealth of financial, operations, and consulting experience; he led teams at major consulting companies and banks. To introduce Ryan to readers of Ads&IDEAS, Craig Miller, our Communications Manager, conducted a brief interview.

Craig: Thanks for taking the time to talk today. You've been COO at the Elliott Co. for roughly four months, how have you found your experience at the Elliott Co. so far?

Ryan: Happy to do it — It's been fantastic. Yes, I think it's been about four months so far and I've spent most of that time traveling around the country, meeting our clients and getting to know their businesses.

I like the fact that no two days are alike. All of our clients are unique, with different needs and different media assets. Adding on to that the new business aspect, where we're literally getting emails from 20-30 different companies a day, has made it very exciting.

Craig: You spent the last decade in consulting, at KPMG and at EY, helping lead their respective financial services business on the West Coast. Have you seen many similarities between working at the Elliott Co.? Differences?

Ryan: I've definitely seen similarities, starting with each day being different. But further than that, I've found that companies hire us for many of the same reasons they hire consulting firms, which is, they lack the resources, time, or expertise to do something on their own and they need the Elliott Co., same as they need a professional services firm. As such, I'm trying to bring that client-centric sense that they instill in consulting, to the Elliott Co. This for us means listening more closely to our partners and being more responsive to their needs. On a macrolevel, it means helping them move quickly to adapt to the ever-changing media landscape. With regard to differences, we've invested much more heavily in our clients and our people. During a consulting project, if something

went sideways, we could always pull the ripcord and find another Fortune 500 company to pay us by the hour. Here we don't have that luxury, we have people whose livelihoods depend on us.

Craig: What's next for the Elliott Co.?

Ryan: Well, we want to support our clients in full. Meaning, selling them and all their media assets as a package. We've been heavily investing recently in selling event spaces and sponsorships. This has been an area of growth for many of our brands after the pandemic, and we've had a lot of success with new and existing clients in this area. I also don't see the events business slowing down with continuing working-from-home trends and the need for people to have those face-to-face interactions that they aren't necessarily getting in the office these days. So, we are trying to grow events as a business as well as bring on new clients to support the company.

Also, we've been getting a lot of interest from overseas clients, both in Europe and Asia, wanting to know how they can break into the U.S. market. I have no idea where these conversations will lead, but it's exciting to talk to new clients in new markets and discover what their unique challenges are. Other than that, we will continue to try and sell as much as possible for our existing clients and make sure they are happy and retain us!

Craig: You mentioned bringing on new clients; any particular segment you want to focus on?

Ryan: Both commercial and association brands are important to us. Our experience with commercial brands has always been rewarding and instructive; their revenue depends heavily on advertising and events, and profitability is essential. We've had a lot of success with associations, where advertising is not their main source of revenue. Their focus is on how they can best serve their customer, which are of course their members, and if they don't have to worry about bringing in ad revenue, then they can focus on creating the absolute best content for their members and not on sales targets. So those have been great clients for us.